1/27/67

Dear Jerry,

Two things I didn't expect happened yesterday. Our crocuses came out in full bloom a month or two ahead of season and I got tossed off the Metromedia special that was supposed to have been mine when their staff chickened out on me in early December. The reason given does not make sense to me. I do, however, respect Nizer's resourcefulness and his total lack of scruple.

Paul Noble phoned, not Mel Baily, to say "Mel has decided he doesn't want that kind of show", whatever "that kind" is since the show hasn't been taped and the "kind" is quite within their control.

After the Nizer debate on WOR I wrote and said this was the man most completely honest about being entirely dishonest that I had ever met in my life, that the flow of lies was more natural and unconcerned and nonstop than I have ever conceived possible, and that is was clear he wasn't at all embarrassed about being proven a liar. I said that with what I believe is involved in this subject I wanted them to know that unless Schoebrun made an effort to control both the allocation of time and the responsibility of the participants, to the degree possible I would. Also, they rang Lane in on it, on the ground he is a "personality". If there is any place this is not true it is their station. Even New York cops remember me. I'll have to tell you the story sometime about how my appearance on the Burke show saved me a pile of dough when my car got towed away. Well, on Lane, I said I expect them to hol him to our prior agreements and Schoenbrun to control the upstaging, for Lane stole a lot of my stuff last time, knowingly. On the night of December 5, we sat for hours in Mel's office, with one of the vice-presidents and Paul there. It seems none of the Commission staff save two minor ones would appear against me. So They asked "Nizer"? And I said, okay, Nizer, but you pay me, and they agreed.

Except for WNEW and this WOR think, there has been only one other time I've had to really fight. That was on the Long John show with Lasky and O'Dougherty. The rest of my appearances have been the kind I prefer, quiet, because those rough ones take something out of me that can never be put back.

I'm told that in the first hour after the first WOR showing they got 7,000 phone calls and the first day 2,700 letters, and that they consider this the most historic thing they ever did. Normally one would expect this kind of thing to be what stations want, so even if I do not want that kind of show, it does not make sense to me that WNEW doesn't. But as I say, the kind of show they have is entirely within their control, aside from controlling the participants. By pitting Lane against Nizer, even without the two staff lawyers, I fear that Nizer will so load that audience with misinfirmation that any debating points Lane gets in will mean little.

This is not a total loss for me, because withiut telling them I'd decided to dig up some entirely fresh stuff for this show, and boy! do I have it, partly with a property accessible to them. I've gotten a tape of Oswald's plea of innocence that seems to have disappeared from all the network footage (I had it in Calif and left it there but phoned for its return for this show) and new documentation that proves without doubt that before it held its first hearing that, as I charged in WHITEWASH, the sole purpose of the Commission was to prove Oswald the lone and unassisted assassin, that the Commission, as late as the end of January 1964 said Connally was struck by a separate bullet, and this after discussion with the autopsy doctors, and much more. I have enough for a whole TV show in my possession right now, and the rest was to have been Xeroxed for me today. I'm making a trip to Washington to pick it up. It will include the names and addresses of photographers never called by the Commission and footage it never saw.

There isn't enough time for writing anything before I go so I'm telling you this and I'll be asking you some things.

Please do not spread this around, because there is a chance I can now sell it, and I certainly need to.

I'm not satisfied with the reason Paul gave me, not satisfied that Mel didn't do his own dirty work, and you will recall I told you right after taping the WOR show that it would not surprize me if Nizer wasn't going to meet me again. I think he has devised a better way than I thought he would.

Another thing has to do with Manchester. A Boston radio station phoned me Friday night to tape my reaction to the second Manchester instalment, based on the AP's advance story on it. Of course, I was shocked, even though, as you know, I've expected the worst. I was particularly stunned at his wanton assault on the Secret Service escort. It is also an invalid one. They like what I was saying so much they taped me for two hours, to use parts of it as and when they can, and since then we've arranged for me to go to Boston and spend a day on a live, two-hour radio show and the rest, to the limit of their capacity, taping radio and TV stuff, including on Manchester, and making slides for them to use in the future.

But the more I thought about this miserable thing that insane Bastard who thinks he is a combination of God and the Kennedy's Machiavelli, and to those unfortunate human beings who were guarding the President when he was murdered the more wrought up I became. There stayed in my mental eye the picture of the beautiful daughter of one who came up to me after one of my appearances to thank me for the fine things I had said of her father, who she identified on my request, since I didn't know her. Are sweet kids like this to bear a stigma because Manchester ordains it? Are their parents to suffer more grief than is rightly theirs? They were not responsible for the assassination and there was nothing they could do about it, even, as Manchester falsely claims, had they reacted faster.

So, I got a story in the Frederick paper whose reporter, at my suggestion, fed it to AP, which, surprisingly, carried it. I doubt if it got used much. Then I went to Washington Monday and tried to get CBS, NBC, a couple of local stations, Scripps Howard, the Post, the Star, etc., interested. A local station taped me in a brief defense and Scripps Howard may get interested. They did phone WNEW for a transcript of the special. I had nothing to do with this, didn't even tell them about it. Wednesday morning the Baltimore Sun carried the piece from AP (but not from their own reporter, who I'd also phoned). Wednesday night I got a wonderful anonymous phone call from a woman who is a neighbor, she said, of several of these Secret Service men, to tell me in the most flattering terms what kind of a wonderful American I am to go to the trouble of trying to help these men in such an unfortunate position.

From this I wonder if perhaps this incident might not be the kind of thing that Today would be interested in. Would you ask your contacts there? It is a strange thing that people do not understand, that although I am the strongest critic of the Report and what the government has done, I am also theonly one among the critics who defends the integrity of the members of the Commission and seeks to keep blame from being heaped where it does not belong. Aside from the schmalz involved in this incident, of which I am aware but which is not my motivation, I think it is a legitimate journalistic thing. These men should not be so vilified, so condemned in history, when there is nothing they can do or say in their own defense. Can they call the papers and say, "Hey, I'm not a bum, I'm a hero"? The truth is some of them that day were heroic, and two risked their lives. One has since been retired for disability because his ulcer could not take the consequences. Nor can the Secret Service open this thing and try and defend the men.

What I'm suggesting for Today is safe, a lot safer than what they did with Lane. I wish I knew who had spread the poison there. It does not get into whether or not the Report is right, whether Oswald was a lone or lone and unassisted assasin, or any of the basic stuff. It is just to show that Manchester has condemned innocent men and their decendants for generations by really chaging charging them with responsibility for the assassination. This is exactly what he did do. He said that they could stil l have saved the Presient's life after the first shot. What a monster that wretched man is.

I've been working over his LOOK pieces. He is even more inaccurate than I predicted on the assassination. I'd have finished a very long rough draft of "The Unofficial Whitewash: William Manchester" had WNEW not phoned. I've 30 pages done on just the assassination stuff. There is little I have to add, and I hope to finish that tonight when I get back from Washington and then edit the index to WHITEWASH II, which my wife has finished cording. Dell says they want II, but they're using very small figures. I wish I had a way of exciting other interest but I feel I must keep researching and writing. I'm behind on III and them orders for it come in daily, including even requests for review copies!

There is not a single accurate statement about the assassination that I've seen in Manchester's work. I think there can be a book on just that, fast and hot. I could have a very rough draft done, if I have nothing else to do, within two weeks of the appearance of the last piece. And I think all over the world those publishers who either did not bid on it or who bid and lost out could get a very fine competitive advantage from such a book.

I know you are busy and tired but I'd like to ask that you do something for me. Ask WOR for a transcript of that show. Find out if it was edited and what their real response was. I find it incredible that they haven't forwarded a single letter to me (even Dell is getting letters for me), for I've neger done a show that wasn't followed by mail, a pelgue because so much of it has to be answered but a blessing because so much of it is so inspiring.

Some day I'll write a long magazine piece called "How to Get Rich and Respected and Sell Books", about Louis Bizer.

Do you know any magazine that pays anything that would be or could be interested in a Manchester expose, documented?

Best,

Harold